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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application in view of the remarks provided below is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 31-37 are pending.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC 102 and 35 USC 103

Claims 31-37 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carlucci ('299) in view of Luizzi ('291). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 31 recites, in part, that the claimed absorbent article includes "a substantially transparent liquid absorbing absorbent system arranged between said cover layer and said barrier layer, *wherein said absorbent system is substantially free of cellulosic material* and comprises a mixture of a hot melt adhesive and a liquid-absorbing polymer". (Emphasis Added) It is respectfully submitted that a close review of the cited references reveal that they fail, either singularly or in combination, to disclose and/or suggest an article including such a structure.

US Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0065299 to Carlucci et al. purports to disclose a transparent absorbing article. In one embodiment the absorbent core of said transparent article includes a water based hydrogel adhesive. This reference fails to disclose or suggest the use of a mixture of a hotmelt adhesive and a liquid absorbent polymer in the manner of the claimed invention. This reference also fails to disclose the use of such a mixture in an absorbent system that is free of fibrous material in the manner of the claimed invention according to amended claim 31.

EP1013291 to Luizzi discloses a hot melt adhesive mixture that is capable of absorbing aqueous liquids, the mixture may include a liquid absorbing polymer. Luizzi also discloses an absorbent article including such hot melt adhesive mixture, the article

having a cover layer 10, barrier layer 20 and an absorbent element 30. The hot melt adhesive mixture 40 adheres the cover 10 to the absorbent element 30. It is noted that Luizzi does not specify that the absorbent element 30 is free of fibrous material in the manner of the claimed invention nor does Luizzi suggest the use of a hotmelt adhesive mixture in a transparent article.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail, either singularly or in combination, to disclose and/or suggest an article including "a substantially transparent liquid absorbing absorbent system arranged between said cover layer and said barrier layer, *wherein said absorbent system is substantially free of fibrous material and comprises a mixture of a hot melt adhesive and a liquid-absorbing polymer.*"

Claims 32-36 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 31 and thus are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 31.

In the Office Action the Examiner suggests that it would be obvious to one of skill in the art to modify the hydrogel material taught by Carlucci to further include the hot-melt adhesive and liquid absorbent hydrogel polymer as taught by Luizzi. (See Office Action, p. 2-3). The Examiner's position is respectfully traversed. Hot melt adhesive is typically applied at an elevated temperature accordingly if a hot melt adhesive was applied to the hydrogel adhesive of Carlucci the water in the hydrogel adhesive would evaporate causing serious processing problems. Further, the water in the hydrogel adhesive would be absorbed by the liquid absorbent polymer further resulting serious processing problems and rendering the polymer ineffective at absorbing additional fluid. Accordingly, it is submitted that it would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the combination proposed by the Examiner to thereby arrive at the claimed invention.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to call the applicants' undersigned representative if any further action will expedite the prosecution of the application or if the Examiner has any suggestions or questions concerning the application or the present Response. In fact, if the claims of the application are not believed to be in full condition for allowance, for any reason, the applicants respectfully request the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims pursuant to MPEP § 707.07(j) or in making constructive suggestions pursuant to MPEP § 706.03 so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,

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